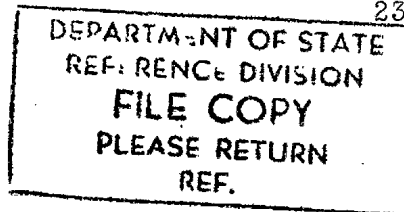


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Subject: Brief Surveys.

To : Director of Intelligence, WDGS
Att: Chief, Collection Group
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300799

Enclosed herewith, for your information and file, two copies
of the Brief Survey of Guadeloupe, French West Indies, revised as of
30 June 1946.

Incl-
B.S. of Guadeloupe, FWI
(in dupl.)

J. VAZQUEZ
Major, GSC
Acting ACofS, G-2

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B R I E F S U R V E Y
O F
G U A D E L O U P E, F. W. I.

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B R I E F S U R V E Y

O F

G U A D E L O U P E, F. W. I.

A. BASIC INFORMATION ON THE COUNTRY.

Guadeloupe, one of the French West Indies, consists of two large islands, Basse-Terre and Grande-Terre, separated by a narrow channel, and five smaller islands. The group lies near the center of the crescent of the Lesser Antilles along north 16° latitude and west of longitude 61° of longitude 62°. The area of the entire group is 685 square miles and the population 304,289 (1940). The capital is in Basse-Terre. The strategic importance of Guadeloupe arises out of its position in a chain of bases extending from Cuba to Trinidad to defend the Panama Canal and the Caribbean trade routes.

1. Military and Naval Forces.

a. There is only one military unit in Guadeloupe, the 3rd Company of the Antilles Battalion of Colonial Infantry, which has its other two companies and headquarters in Martinique. The 3rd Company is quartered in part at Camp Admiral Jacob at St. Claude, a few miles above the capital of Basse-Terre, and in part at Fort Richepanse, Basse-Terre. The strength of the military establishment is two officers and approximately 175 men. The officer strength is exclusive of the colonial military medical officers who, though military officers, work for the colony rather than the army and are paid, while on this special status, by the colony. One of these doctors is, however, detailed to work with the troops in addition to other medical duties. The military commander of Guadeloupe, who is responsible at the same time to the Governor and to the Commanding officer of the French Antilles-Guiana Command, is Captain MARTRE, a Colonial Infantry officer who succeeded Captain HIEGANT DE SAINT MAUR in May 1946. The strength of the 3rd Company tends to fluctuate somewhat because Guadeloupe troops repatriated from France for separation are carried on its roster while on terminal furlough. The enlisted men are practically all natives of Guadeloupe, most of whom are serving their period of military training. Due to the shortage of officers as a result of demobilizations and repatriations, MARTRE is Military Commander of Guadeloupe and Commanding Officer of the 3rd Company at the same time.

b. Potential Manpower - 18,000.

c. Air Force - None.

d. Naval Force - None.

2. Population.

a. The last official figure was 304,289 in 1940, but the total is believed to be slightly higher now. French is the common language.

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except in St. Martin, where the negroes are English-speaking. Roman Catholic is the universal religion.

3. Transportation Facilities.

a. Improved roads: Total mileage, 754. They are well constructed and well maintained.

b. Railroads: There are no passenger carrying railroads in the colony. The railroads that do exist are used solely for transportation purposes in the sugar plantations.

c. Navigable rivers: None.

d. Air lines: Guadeloupe has no regular air service since Pan American Airways discontinued its seaplane flights through the Lesser Antilles following the crash in the bay of Fort-de-France, Martinique, in the fall of 1945 of the only plane it had for such service. Air mail is sent once a week by boat to Antigua where it connects with Pan American Airways. There is no real air field on the island, but a European Frenchman named Remy de HAENEN, who is established on the island of Saint Barthelemy, a dependency of Guadeloupe, cleared a small landing strip at Saint Felix between Le Gosier and Sainte Anne on the island of Grande Terre, Guadeloupe, for his small Stinson. He was attempting to organize a local charter service between the French West Indian islands, but has had little success.

e. Harbors: Pointe-a-Pitre is the only harbor of importance. The harbor affords secure and safe anchorage during all seasons and in all kinds of weather. It has general depths of four to five fathoms, increasing to six and one-half fathoms and over in the entrance channel. There is a shortage of storage space, and efforts are being made to secure the necessary materials to put up more warehouses.

B. GENERAL SITUATION

1. Political.

Like Martinique, Guadeloupe was raised to the status of a French Department in March 1946 by the French Assembly, with 1 January 1947 set as the deadline for the completion of the change to the new status. Although the reorganization is yet to come, it will be more of form than of act for the administrative organization of Guadeloupe differs little from that of a French Department. The Governor as well as his assistant, the Secretary General, are appointed by the Minister of Colonies of the Provisional Government of the French Republic and they are directly responsible to him. A Privy Council of prominent local citizens is appointed by the Governor to advise him. Universal suffrage prevails just as in France, and the voters elect the 36 members of the General Council, the local legislative body, and the two representatives from

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Guadeloupe to the French Constituent Assembly. The General Council is more powerful than the General Council of a French Department because it has a greater degree of control over the budget.

The political situation in Guadeloupe is much the same as in Martinique. It is a direct outcome of the economic and race problems which are exploited by petty politicians attempting to further their own ambitions. The poverty of the great masses of colored people, in sharp contrast with the wealth of the white and mulatto property owners, relatively few in number, causes the economic and racial questions to fuse and gives the politicians an opportunity to win popular favor by campaigning against the "exploiters of the people". The natives of Guadeloupe seem to be more excitable than those of Martinique, and are more easily led into mob action.

From the departure in October 1945 for France of Maurice BERTAUT, the first Governor to follow the end of the Vichy regime in 1943, until the arrival of Ernest de NATTES, the new Governor, in June 1946, the chief executive was an Acting Governor, Andre PIERRE, the former Secretary General. His tenure of office was marked by continued and often times bitter labor strife despite his efforts to conciliate labor and the politicians. He made great concessions to the demands of labor, but each concession was used as a wedge to gain a new one until, in order to avert social disorders and a general breakdown, he had to go further and further in meeting labor's demands. He was charged by the conservative elements, with some justification, of allowing himself to be governed instead of being a governor. At the end of April 1946 a new Governor, Ernest de NATTES, was appointed and PIERRE was designated to become Secretary General of the French African Colony of Guinea. NATTES did not arrive in the Colony until the end of June 1946, and nothing is known of him at the present time.

The Socialist and Communist Parties are the only real organized political groups in Guadeloupe. After combatting each other in the municipal elections of May 1945, they joined forces in a "proletarian entente" for the General Council and French Constituent Assembly elections of October and November 1945, only to fall out again in the second Constituent Assembly election of June 1946. The friction between the two parties was caused by Mme. Felix EBOUE, widow of the Negro governor. In the election for the first Constituent Assembly, she ran as a pro-de Gaulle independent against the Communist candidate who, officially at least, had the backing of the Socialists but after she was elected she joined the Socialist Party. In the other Guadeloupe constituency the Socialist leader Paul VALENTINO., was elected with the help of the Communists. As a result, the Communists, who had expected to win one of the two constituencies with the help of the Socialists, found the Socialists entrenched in both. For a while the unity of the two parties was maintained in the General Council, but when the election for the second Constituent Assembly came around the "proletarian entente" fell apart completely because the Socialists refused to disavow Mme. EBOUE and support the Communist candidate. The two Socialist incumbents were re-elected.

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Although the Socialists are dominant at the moment, the Communist Party is well organized, vociferous, and quick to take full advantage of all opportunities to further its cause. It is well entrenched in the labor organizations. Active leadership of the party has been relinquished to some extent by its titular head, Dr. Rosan GIRARD, the unsuccessful candidate in the first Constituent Assembly election, because of poor health, but in Amedee FENGAROL, a school teacher and labor leader, Mlle. Gerty ARCHIMEDE, an lawyer who ran unsuccessfully against Mme. EBOUE in the second Constituent Assembly election, Remy MAINSOUTTA, a retired veterinarian, and Simeon PIOOHS, a former sugar mill worker, the party has an extremely vocal and well-knit board of strategy. The Communist newspaper ETINCELLE is a superior party organ than the Socialist FRATERNITE and is edited in a style more likely to capture the interest of non-party members.

There is no real third party, the rest of the political office holders or seekers being independents who wometimes join forces under one political name or another. Maurice SATINEQU, deputy from Guadeloupe to the pre-war French parliament and one-time socialist, has fallen into discredit. He was a candidate in the Constituent Assembly elections of 1945 and 1946 but he was hopelessly beaten. He still has a political organization in his native village of St. Anne, where he was revoked as mayor in April 1946 by Acting Governor Andre PIERRE for alleged mal-administration, but it is doubtful that he will regain his former standing in local politics.

2. Economic

Primarily a monoculture country dependent on imports for much of its food and for practically all of its manufactured goods, the devaluation of the franc in December 1945 from 50 francs to the dollar to 120 francs to the dollar was a severe blow to the local economy. Most of the imports come from the United States since the mother country, itself exhausted by the war, is unable to resume its pre-war place of principal supplier of local needs. The increase of almost 150% in the cost of the majority of imports was not compensated by the opening of new markets which would pay in the dollar exchange so badly needed by the colony for the purchasing of goods.

As was to be expected, the devaluation was followed by a sharp increase in the cost of living despite the palliative measures which were taken. This rise in the cost of living served to envenom the already poor relations between labor and managements. Strikes which tied up shipping and sugar production degenerated into a general strike englobing even the civil servants. The politicians backed labor despite the appeals from the central government in Paris that only by limiting wage increases could inflation be avoided. Labor was given full satisfaction. The protracted strike of the sugar workers delayed the start of the grinding season and had an adverse effect on the crop. Production figures for 1946 have not yet been revealed, but it has been estimated that production will be some 30% lower than the original estimate, which had put it at about 50,000 tons.

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The protests raised over the devaluation of the franc because of the colony's dependence on the United States for its imports resulted in the creation by the French Government of a compensation fund to subsidize basic food imports. The advances of up to 200 million francs which the French Government is to make to operate the fund are to be paid back from revenue to be raised by special export taxes on rum and bananas. The taxes, however, have been objected to by the exporters, and the fund has not begun to operate despite the decrees putting it into effect.

In an attempt to reduce the need for importing food items because of procurement difficulties arising from world shortages and the adverse effect on the cost of living of such imports, the administration has campaigned to increase local production of food. The mayors of the communes have been solicited to determine what aid is needed to stimulate the raising of local vegetables and the big property holders have been advised to give over part of their holdings to vegetable growing if they want to avoid having the administration making such action mandatory. At that, Guadeloupe has an advantage over Martinique because it does produce a greater percentage of its food needs. It is almost self-sufficient in meat, and fresh fish and locally-grown vegetables are more easily procurable.

Although Guadeloupe is basically a monoculture country dependent on the sugar cane, it does produce coffee, vanilla, and cacao, and the banana is its most important export after sugar and rum. Banana exports have been increasing since a regular banana boat service between the French West Indies and France was established at the beginning of 1946. The inability to export bananas during the war years, however, resulted in a general deterioration of the plantations which will need some time to recover.

The difficulties of the situation are illustrated by the 1945 trade figures. Although Guadeloupe had an excess of exports over imports of 535,600,000 francs, the favorable balance was an artificial one resulting from the inability to procure all the imports needed and from the shipping to France of the backlog of sugar which had piled up during the war years when shipping was unavailable. Imports in 1945 were only about half what they were in 1938, whereas sugar exports totaled 113,000 tons although the year's PRODUCTION WAS ONLY 28,000 tons. The 1946 sugar production will be greater than that of 1945, but the sugar exports will total only about 25,000 tons because of local needs.

The effect of the devaluation on government finances is shown in the 1946 budget figures. As originally drawn up in December 1945 before the devaluation, the budget was fixed at 266 million francs, but in 1946 the Acting Governor was obliged to submit to the General Council a total of 176 million francs in supplementary estimates. Whatever may be the modifications made by the General Council in the details of the Supplementary estimates, the final 1946 budget will be almost double the corresponding figure of 1945.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~C. IMPORTANT PERSONNEL IN THE GOVERNMENT

1. Ernest de NATTES - Governor. Appointed by the French Government in April 1946 but did not arrive in the colony until 19 June 1946. Little is known of the new Governor at the present time except that he was born in 1898 and that he belongs to the cadre of civil servants under the Minister of the Interior rather than the Minister of Colonies. He served as prefect, the representative of the central government, of the Ariege Department. He is "on loan" from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Colonies. His wife and one child are with him.

2. Paul VALENTINO - Mayor of Pointe-a-Pitre and one of Guadeloupe's two representatives in the French Constituent Assembly. Born 9 June 1902 at Pointe-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe, VALENTINO has long been active in local politics. He is head of the local Socialist Party and member of the General Council.. He became the most prominent local politician when ~~he was chosen in 1943 by the General Council~~ political activity was restored with the departure of Admiral Robert. He was chosen in 1943 by the General Council to represent the colony in the Provisional Consultative Assembly of the De Gaulle regime in Algiers and later in Paris. He was elected to the first French Constituent Assembly with Communist support in the fall of 1945, and was re-elected in June 1946 despite his break with the Communists. There is good reason to believe that he made sure of his victory over his Communist opponent by juggling the voting results, a common practice. He is a politician of the ward-healer type with few principles and less scruples.

3. Mme. Felix EBOUE - One of Guadeloupe's two delegates to the French Constituent Assembly. Born 21 November 1891 at Cayenne, French Guiana, Mme. EBOUE is the widow of the late well-known Negro governor, also a native of Cayenne, who was one of the first colonial officials to join de Gaulle in 1940. She entered politics for the first time by running as an independent for the French Constituent Assembly in the fall of 1945. She had the unofficial backing of the administration and defeated the Communist leader Dr. Rosan GIRARD. Shortly after her election she joined the Socialist Party, and it was as a Socialist that she was re-elected in June 1946. Much of the local Communist Party's propaganda is aimed against her. Her name is sometimes given as EBOUE-TELL, the TELL" being her maiden name.

4. Joseph PITAT - Mayor of Basse-Terre and president of the General Council. A doctor by profession, he is one of the leaders of the Socialist Party.

5. Remy B. NAINSOUTA - Mayor of St. Claude and Member of the General Council. Born 1 October 1883 at St. Claude, Guadeloupe. A veterinarian who was at one time inspector general of the veterinary services of Guadeloupe, ~~and~~ he is now retired. Has long been active in local politics and is one of the leaders of the Communist Party. Was delegate from Guadeloupe to the West Indian Conference held at St. Thomas at the beginning of 1946. His choice was imposed on the Acting Governor by the politicians. Has separatist opinions and has been outspoken in his criticism of French administration.

6. Rosan GIRARD - Head of the Communist Party. A doctor by profession, he is mayor of the Le Moule and members of the General Council. He was defeated by Mme. Felix EBOUE in the November 1945 election for the first French Constituent Assembly. Sickness reduced his activity as head of the Communist Party and he did not run in the second election for a Constituent Assembly in June 1946, but he campaigned for the Communist candidates.

7. Amedee FENGAROL - Member of the General Council. A school teacher and leading Communist, he is also active in the labor movement. He was one of the delegates of Guadeloupe labor to a meeting organized in Paris in the spring of 1946 by the French General Confederation of Labor, to which the central labor organization of Guadeloupe is affiliated. He was the Communist candidate who unsuccessfully opposed the re-election of Socialist PAUL VALENTINO to the French Constituent Assembly in June 1946.

8. Louis CABUZEL - Member of Privy Council.

9. Joseph D'RICOU - Member of Privy Council.

10. Paul LAMARRE - Member of Privy Council.

11. Lyonnel MELOIR - Member of Privy Council.

D. DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR OFFICIALS RESIDENT IN THE AREA.

1. Norway - A. BARBOTTEAU - Honorary Consul

2. Spain - Charles COLLOMB - Honorary Consul at Pointe-a-Pitre.
Jean COLLOMB - Honorary Consul at Basse-Terre.

3. Belgium - A. BOUGARD - Honorary Consul.

4. Haiti - F. RAVILLION - Honorary Consul at Pointe-a-Pitre.
R. LACASDADE - Honorary Consul at Basse-Terre

5. Holland - C. TRIONVILLE - Honorary Consul

6. Sweden - P. MORROUX - Honorary Consul

7. Dominican Republic - F. PETRELLUZZI - Honorary Consul

8. Italy - Antonio VENUTOLO - Honorary Consul

9. Venezuela - (f.n.u.) CARRIDO - Agent for the Venezuelan Consul
at Fort-de-France, Martinique.

10. Lebanon - Jean SARKIS - Consular Agent.

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E. UNITED STATES CONSULAR OFFICIALS

None. Guadeloupe is within the consular jurisdiction of the United States Consulate at Martinique, and is visited regularly by U. S. Consul William H. CHRISTENSEN.

F. MILITARY AND NAVAL ATTACHES

None.

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